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COORDINATION AND INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL PROGRAMMES

Report of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination on its seventeenth session

SUMMARY

At its seventeenth session, the Working Group followed up on the implementation of the 1993 System of National Accounts (paras. 3-6); reviewed the work of the inter-agency task forces that had been established in eight subject-matter areas (paras. 7-28); made recommendations on the methods of reporting of those task forces (paras. 29 and 30); considered further ways of strengthening the role of the regional commissions in statistics (paras. 31-33), as well as other matters of coordination in international statistical work and the follow-up to decisions of the Statistical Commission (paras. 34-39 and 44, 45); requested action to improve the development of statistics of the domestic service sector in developing countries (paras. 40-43); considered problems in the area of technical cooperation in statistics (paras. 46-50); made decisions on the agenda and documentation for the twenty-eighth session of the Statistical Commission (paras. 51-71); and made recommendations on the dates, venue and agenda for the eighteenth session of the Working Group (paras. 72 and 73).

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CONTENTS

	Paragraphs	Page
INTRODUCTION	1 - 2	4
I. IMPLEMENTATION AND OTHER FOLLOW-UP OF THE 1993 SYSTEM OF NATIONAL ACCOUNTS	3 - 6	4
II. STRENGTHENING INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL COOPERATION: WORK OF THE INTER-AGENCY TASK FORCES	7 - 37	5
A. Inter-agency Task Force on Industrial and Construction Statistics	7 - 8	5
B. Inter-agency Task Force on International Trade Statistics	9 - 11	5
C. Inter-agency Task Force on Price Statistics including the International Comparison Programme	12 - 15	6
D. Inter-agency Task Force on Environment Statistics	16 - 18	7
E. Inter-agency Task Force on Finance Statistics	19 - 21	7
F. Inter-agency Task Force on Service Statistics	22 - 25	8
G. Inter-agency Task Force on the Measurement of Poverty	26 - 28	9
H. General observations on the task forces	29 - 30	9
I. Strengthening the role of the regional commissions in statistics	31 - 33	10
J. Other matters related to strengthening international statistical cooperation	34 - 37	11
III. MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS OF THE STATISTICAL COMMISSION	38 - 39	12
IV. SERVICES STATISTICS	40 - 43	12
V. STATISTICAL SUPPORT FOR POLICY ANALYSIS ISSUES AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL	44 - 45	13
VI. TECHNICAL COOPERATION IN STATISTICS	46 - 50	13
VII. PROVISIONAL AGENDA AND DOCUMENTATION FOR THE TWENTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE STATISTICAL COMMISSION	51 - 70	14

CONTENTS (continued)

		Paragraphs	Page
VIII.	DATES, VENUE AND AGENDA OF THE EIGHTEENTH SESSION OF THE WORKING GROUP	71 - 72	18
IX.	NOTE OF APPRECIATION	73	18

Annexes

I.	List of participants	20
II.	List of documents	22
III.	Agenda	23

INTRODUCTION

1. The seventeenth session of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination of the Statistical Commission was held in New York from 6 to 9 September 1994. The list of participants is contained in annex I; the list of documents, in annex II; the agenda is contained in annex III.

2. Following previous practice and in accordance with a decision made by the Statistical Commission at its special session (11-15 April 1994), the officers elected at the special session who attended the Working Group meeting served as its officers, as follows: Chairman - J. Olenski (Poland); Vice-Chairmen - H. Montero (Argentina) and D. Diangamo (Zambia); Rapporteur - W. McLennan (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland).

I. IMPLEMENTATION AND OTHER FOLLOW-UP OF THE 1993 SYSTEM OF NATIONAL ACCOUNTS

3. Item 3 was discussed on the basis of the report prepared by the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on National Accounts (ISWGNA) (E/CN.3/AC.1/1994/R.2). The Working Group noted that because the report had been prepared only shortly after the special session of the Statistical Commission, it did not contain much additional information. The Working Group also had before it, as a background document, the main conclusions of the ISWGNA meeting held on 25 April 1994.

4. The Working Group endorsed the procedures agreed by ISWGNA for its future operations, including the nomination of the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat (UNSTAT) as the secretariat of ISWGNA, and it noted that UNSTAT, inter alia, would develop a work programme of member organizations and monitor and update it as necessary. In addition, the Working Group reaffirmed the importance of the role of the regional commissions in the implementation of the 1993 SNA.

5. There was a constructive discussion about precisely what the implementation of the 1993 SNA meant, with many countries and agencies contributing positively. Among issues considered were that:

(a) Countries played a fundamental role in the process, since implementation occurred at the country level;

(b) The nature, methods and timing of requirements would vary among countries, and even within countries; however, countries in similar stages of political and economic development would be likely to face similar requirements;

(c) The regional commissions played a vital and pivotal role in the process;

(d) The Statistical Commission must adopt a view on the issue;

(e) International agencies must work together towards the goals agreed by the Statistical Commission. 1/, 2/

Action taken by the Working Group

6. The Working Group requested the Inter-agency Task Force on National Accounts, through ISWGNA, to prepare a precise statement of the objectives of the implementation of the 1993 SNA, as well as the strategies to be adopted to achieve those objectives, for presentation to the Statistical Commission at its next session. The Working Group noted that the Statistical Commission would expect a work programme for the implementation process to be presented to it at its twenty-eighth session as it had requested at its special session. 3/

II. STRENGTHENING INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL COOPERATION: WORK OF THE INTER-AGENCY TASK FORCES

A. Inter-agency Task Force on Industrial and Construction Statistics

7. An oral report was presented to the Working Group by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the convener of the Task Force, together with a background document containing the report of the Task Force on its meeting of 20 June 1994. The Working Group was informed that the Task Force would conduct a follow-up to the original survey on the implementation and use of the International Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities, revision 3 (ISIC, Rev.3), on a one-to-one interview basis. The results of the interviews would be reported to the Statistical Commission at its twenty-eighth session.

Action taken by the Working Group

8. The Working Group:

(a) Took note of the draft outline of the report of the Task Force on its meeting of 20 June 1994;

(b) Reminded the Task Force that the Statistical Commission, at its special session, had asked the Task Force to prepare proposals on expanding its programme to cover all statistics on the production of goods, except agricultural goods.

B. Inter-agency Task Force on International Trade Statistics

9. The Working Group discussed the item on the basis of oral reports made by the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the convener of the Task Force, and by UNSTAT, as well as on the basis of two background papers: (a) the report of the Task Force on its meeting of 15 to 17 February 1994, and (b) the

results of a survey of the compliance of countries with international recommendations for international trade statistics.

10. The Working Group agreed that the Task Force was working on the critical aspects of trade statistics and that progress was being made; it welcomed the work being carried out by the Task Force to evaluate international comparability and reporting practices in international trade statistics. The Working Group also noted that variations in country reporting practices required that international organizations and other users working on regional and world analysis and intercountry comparisons needed to adjust nationally reported data to obtain comparable data; estimates for non-reported data had to be made as well. The Working Group noted further that the many changes that had occurred in international trading arrangements required that existing international trade concepts and definitions be revised.

Action taken by the Working Group

11. The Working Group:

(a) Requested UNSTAT to carry out an analysis of country practices on a regional basis and in respect of developed and developing countries, as well as on a trade-weighted basis, and to examine more fully the extent and importance of non-compliance. It agreed that UNSTAT should proceed with its plan to publish the results of the country practices survey and make them available to countries;

(b) Decided that the question of reporting practices, including any implications for the revision of international concepts and definitions should be considered under the agenda item of trade statistics at the twenty-eighth session of the Statistical Commission;

(c) Agreed that countries (developed countries in the first instance), should analyse their practices and outline a plan of action for improving compliance with the international recommendations, including the rationale for areas of non-compliance, and decided that the Statistical Commission should be asked to endorse that proposal;

(d) Endorsed the planned revision of the concepts and definitions of international trade statistics and its timetable, and asked that they be formally brought to the attention of the Statistical Commission at its twenty-eighth session.

C. Inter-agency Task Force on Price Statistics including the International Comparison Programme

12. The Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat), as the convener of the Task Force, presented an oral report on its meeting of April 1994, held in Luxembourg, and on the activities thereby initiated. The Working Group was informed that the main focus of the Task Force was on using experience from ongoing consumer price index (CPI) harmonization work within the

European Union for the consideration of world-wide issues, as requested by the Statistical Commission.

13. The Working Group noted that work on CPI was fundamental to ICP.

14. The World Bank informed the Working Group of its project to increase both the country coverage of ICP and the integration of ICP work into the regular work of the national statistical offices.

Action taken by the Working Group

15. The Working Group:

(a) Noted that the work done towards the harmonization of CPI was consistent with the Statistical Commission's recommendation for the Task Force;

(b) Requested the convener of the Task Force to prepare a progress report for submission to the Statistical Commission at its twenty-eighth session.

D. Inter-agency Task Force on Environment Statistics

16. The Working Group was briefed by UNSTAT, the convener of the Task Force, on a review of activities and programmes in the areas of environmental statistics, accounting and indicators. The results of the review were summarized in a draft technical note and a more comprehensive synopsis, which were made available to the Working Group as background documents. Those documents and proposals for an action-oriented work programme of the Task Force would be discussed at its first meeting, on 12 September 1994.

17. The Working Group was also briefed on preparatory work for the third session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. The Commission, which would meet in April 1995, was expected to discuss the use of environmental information, accounting and indicators in preparing plans and policies for sustainable development.

Action taken by the Working Group

18. The Working Group requested the convener of the Task Force to prepare a progress report for submission to the Statistical Commission at its twenty-eighth session and stressed the need for the Task Force to produce an integrated programme of work.

E. Inter-agency Task Force on Finance Statistics

19. The representative of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), convener of the Task Force on Finance Statistics, reported orally on the work of the Task Force.

20. At its next meeting, to be held on 29 and 30 November 1994 at IMF headquarters in Washington, D.C., the Task Force would discuss the harmonization of IMF methodologies for monetary and financial statistics and government finance statistics with the 1993 SNA. The Task Force would also consider how to coordinate the collection of financial statistics by international organizations, particularly the reporting and exchange of data in electronic form.

Action taken by the Working Group

21. The Working Group requested the convener of the Task Force to prepare a progress report for submission to the Statistical Commission at its twenty-eighth session, paying special attention to the area of government finance statistics, particularly the growing problem of defining the functions and size of government and the public sector.

F. Inter-agency Task Force on Service Statistics

22. The representative of OECD, convener of the Task Force on Service Statistics, reported orally on the work of the Task Force. Three background documents were made available, on (a) the proposed terms of reference of the Task Force, (b) the report of the Task Force on its first meeting of 7 and 8 July 1994, and (c) a draft questionnaire on activities and requirements relating to trade in services.

23. The Task Force had developed terms of reference and a draft work programme, both of which had been discussed by the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities. The Task Force would compile an inventory of the activities and requirements of international agencies with respect to trade in services and would report on its progress to the Statistical Commission at its twenty-eighth session.

24. There was a discussion relating to the domestic service sector in developing countries (see paras. 40-43 below).

Action taken by the Working Group

25. The Working Group:

(a) Confirmed the terms of reference of the Task Force set out in the background document;

(b) Requested the convener of the Task Force to prepare a progress report for submission to the Statistical Commission at its twenty-eighth session.

G. Inter-agency Task Force on the Measurement of Poverty

26. The Working Group considered the item on the basis of an oral report by the representative of the World Bank, as convener of the Task Force. It also had before it the relevant conclusions of the Statistical Commission at its special session. 4/ In addition, the Working Group had, as a background document, the report on terms of reference for the Task Force submitted to the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities at its twenty-eighth session by the World Bank, including the questionnaire distributed by the Bank to international agencies; and the relevant conclusions of the ACC Subcommittee contained in the Summary of Conclusions (para. 17), on that session, which had been made available as a background document.

27. There was general agreement that a study of both the methodologies used by agencies to measure poverty and the statistics collected was necessary to aid sound interpretation, understanding and use of those measurements, particularly in making international comparisons. However, several members of the Working Group thought that it would be inappropriate for statisticians to make international recommendations to countries about how poverty should be measured, because national practices must vary according to national circumstances and priorities.

Action taken by the Working Group

28. The Working Group agreed that:

(a) The work of the Task Force should proceed along the lines set out in the conclusions of the Statistical Commission at its special session, 5/ which corresponded to items (i), (ii) and (iii) of the background document on the terms of reference;

(b) The wording in subparagraph (c) of the terms of reference of the Task Force contained in the background document should be altered to read:

> To compare the different approaches to the measurement of poverty, highlighting what aspects of poverty each approach measures best, with a view to proposing how different methods may be used to complement one another.

(c) The Task Force should bring to the attention of the Statistical Commission, at its twenty-eighth session, the reservations of the ACC Subcommittee and Working Group concerning any further work aimed at considering international standards. 6/

H. General observations on the task forces

29. The Working Group requested the task forces to ensure that documentation for submission to the Statistical Commission at its twenty-eighth session was both comprehensive and as self-contained as possible. Documents should contain the following information:

(a) Name of the Task Force; date of establishment; convener; and list of members;

(b) Terms of reference, including its authority, i.e., the Statistical Commission, the Working Group or the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities;

(c) Issue-oriented report on work done since the preceding session of the Commission, the results achieved and the resources used (if possible);

(d) Future work programme, including a time-frame and resource requirements;

(e) Any draft decision to be made by the Commission;

(f) Annexes containing the minutes of meeting(s) of the Task Force held since the previous session of the Statistical Commission.

30. As to reporting to the Working Group, in view of the position taken by the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities and the experience of the Working Group at the current session, the Working Group agreed that reporting by the task forces should normally take the form of a brief written report supplemented by oral reports. However, where there was little to report an oral report alone might be appropriate.

I. Strengthening the role of the regional commissions in statistics

31. The Working Group again confirmed the importance of strengthening the role of the regional commissions in statistics but noted that funding for that purpose was scarce.

32. A wide-ranging discussion ensued that covered, inter alia, the following issues:

(a) The Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis of the United Nations Secretariat had made a proposal to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to assist in implementing the 1993 SNA, including substantial provision for regional advisers;

(b) Funding at the regional level was very scarce, so that it was difficult for new work to be undertaken, and recent cutbacks in funding from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UNDP had exacerbated the resource situation;

(c) There was a need to make sure that work programmes at the regional level were in harmony with national and international requirements;

(d) It might be worthwhile to attempt to redefine the role of the regional commissions in statistical work;

(e) The regional commissions and especially the chairpersons of the regional conferences of statisticians should continue to be encouraged to participate at the international level;

(f) Collaboration with regional and subregional intergovernmental organizations carrying out statistical functions should be encouraged;

(g) Countries should be encouraged to play a more active collaborative role in regional commission activities;

(h) Countries should be encouraged to support the allocation of funds to statistics activities by the governing bodies of organizations of the United Nations system.

Action taken by the Working Group

33. The Working Group noted that two members had some innovative ideas about how the regional divisions of international statistics could be enhanced and more generally about the organization of the United Nations statistical system; the Working Group accepted their offer to prepare papers on the topic for consideration at its next meeting. The Working Group noted that for the papers to be useful they should be distributed well in advance and should take account of the report by the Review Group on strengthening international statistical cooperation (E/CN.3/AC.1/1992/R.2) as well as any subsequent developments.

J. Other matters related to strengthening international statistical cooperation

34. The Working Group considered the matter on the basis of an oral report from the Chairman of the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities and a background document containing relevant correspondence between the Chairman and Statistics Canada. The Working Group expressed its satisfaction with the revitalized work and cooperative spirit of the ACC Subcommittee, and the enhanced relationship it was developing with the Working Group. The Working Group had found the report of the Subcommittee on its twenty-seventh session (E/CN.3/1995/11) very useful and requested the Subcommittee to provide similar reports in future. It was noted, however, that the Working Group could have made even greater use of the report at the meeting.

35. The Working Group was orally briefed on the updated and improved version of the inventory of statistical data-collection activities, which was being developed with the use of database techniques. It was stressed that the information in the inventory could be sorted very flexibly, including by subject and organization.

36. The Working Group noted the work that had been done to improve and update the inventory, which was to be considered by the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities.

37. The Working Group considered the report of the Secretary-General on progress in relation to implementing the decisions and recommendations made by the Statistical Commission at its twenty-seventh session (E/CN.3/AC.1/1994/R.4), together with a similar report that had been prepared for the special session of the Statistical Commission (E/CN.3/1994/3), and noted that considerable progress had been made.

III. MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS OF THE STATISTICAL COMMISSION

38. The Working Group considered the item on the basis of a note entitled "Decisions and requests made by the Statistical Commission at its special session (New York, 11-15 April 1994: action taken or planned and any problems" (E/CN.3/AC.1/1994/R.6). The Working Group noted the work that had been done in response to the requests of the Commission.

39. The Working Group:

(a) Encouraged the regional commissions to participate in the work of the task forces, as far as possible, both at meetings and in the work carried out between meetings, so that regional views would be reflected in the work of the task forces; however, it understood why this was often not possible;

(b) Decided that monitoring reports, such as the one under consideration (E/CN.3/AC.1/1994/R.6), should be prepared for sessions of the Working Group only when additional guidance was needed by the Secretariat in relation to requests by the Commission; requested the Secretariat to present such reports in a single self-contained report; and requested the Secretariat to structure future agendas of the Statistical Commission and the Working Group so as to prevent duplication in the coverage of agenda items.

IV. SERVICES STATISTICS

40. The item, which mainly concerned the domestic service sector in developing countries, was introduced through an oral report by the Director of UNSTAT.

41. The Working Group was told that UNSTAT had made considerable efforts to date in attempting to deal with the problem but that it did not have sufficient resources to devote to the work. However, attempts had been and were continuing to be made to find extrabudgetary resources from national statistical offices.

42. Several delegations again reiterated the need for high priority to be given to the item and for resources to be devoted to that work in service statistics. In particular, the suggestion was made that resources should be obtained to provide for a consultant to outline the dimensions of the problem and define subsequent work, which might include an expert group meeting. The suggestion was made that the World Bank could join with UNSTAT in working on the problem. The Bank indicated its interest but wanted more information before considering any possible commitment.

Action taken by the Working Group

43. The Working Group urged UNSTAT to continue to explore all possibilities for advancing that work and to report on its progress to the Statistical Commission at its next session.

V. STATISTICAL SUPPORT FOR POLICY ANALYSIS ISSUES AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

44. The Working Group considered the matter on the basis of an oral report by the Chairman of the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities and paragraphs 2 and 3 of the background document containing the summary of conclusions of the Subcommittee. Two main issues were involved, namely (a) the duplication caused by demands to national statistical offices ensuing from both statistical and non-statistical units of international organizations, and (b) the anomaly of international agencies, having responded to specific policy needs by collecting and disseminating data, continuing to do so after those original policy needs had expired.

45. The Working Group welcomed the studies that several organizations were conducting on those issues and considered them appropriate. The Working Group also requested its members and other countries to provide the organizations concerned or the ACC Subcommittee with information on any specific instances of uncoordinated requests and any continued publication of (unneeded) data, for action. The Working Group decided to consider the matter further at its next session.

VI. TECHNICAL COOPERATION IN STATISTICS

46. The item was introduced through an oral report by the Director of UNSTAT. The Director noted that General Assembly resolution 44/211 of 22 December 1989 on operational activities had adopted comprehensive legislation with long-term implications for the operational activities of the United Nations system in general and technical cooperation in statistics in particular. Those new initiatives were based, inter alia, on the national execution of technical projects, which were designed to foster a programme approach to technical cooperation and a renewed emphasis on capacity-building in development activities.

47. The Working Group noted that the role of UNSTAT in support of technical cooperation in statistics and statistical data processing had changed significantly as a result of resolution 44/211. UNSTAT currently had two interregional advisers funded by the United Nations regular programme and one technical adviser in national accounts financed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Those three technical advisers were the only staff available full-time for direct advisory services and/or country projects technical support.

48. The nature and terms of reference of funding by both the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and UNDP had been presented in the report of the

Secretary-General on technical cooperation in statistics (E/CN.3/1994/14), which had been discussed at the special session of the Statistical Commission. UNFPA had provided UNSTAT with six technical support specialists posts, whose function was to provide the UNFPA country support teams (CST) with state-of-the-art information and research; however, they were not usually available for direct advisory services. With respect to UNDP funding, UNSTAT was only able to utilize the facilities of technical support services at the Programme (TSS-1) and project (TSS-2) levels; even so, those funds required planning horizons of up to two years and projects often had to be integrated into larger country programmes. The Working Group discussed the effect of those funding arrangements on national statistical offices/regional commissions.

49. The Working Group took note of the need for close cooperation and coordination between UNDP and UNSTAT. The Working Group also took note that possible additional sources of funding, such as the Global Environment Facility, should be explored by UNSTAT in the implementation of its technical cooperation programme.

Action taken by the Working Group

50. The Working Group requested UNSTAT, in cooperation with UNFPA and UNDP, to prepare a report analysing the effects of current funding arrangements at the global, regional and country levels.

VII. PROVISIONAL AGENDA AND DOCUMENTATION FOR THE TWENTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE STATISTICAL COMMISSION 7/

51. The Working Group considered the proposals of the Secretariat (E/CN.3/AC.1/1994/R.5) as well as a supplementary note concerning the agenda and documentation for the twenty-eighth session of the Statistical Commission. Additional background documents were available reflecting previous consideration of the agenda and documentation for the twenty-eighth session (see E/CN.3/AC.1/1993/R.3 and supplementary note, E/CN.3/AC.1/1993/R.3/Add.1, E/CN.3/1994/2 and E/1994/29.

52. The Working Group deleted agenda item 3 (Strengthening international statistical cooperation) and decided to consider the related documentation under other relevant items (see paras. 53, 55, 56, 57, 61, 63 and 65 below). The Working Group also deleted item 16 (Technological development and databases) and decided that the report that had been proposed under that item should be submitted as a background document. The Working Group agreed to merge item 11 (Monitoring adherence to adopted United Nations classifications) with item 10 (International economic classifications)

53. The Working Group reconfirmed its earlier decisions on the documentation for the following agenda items:

7. Price statistics.

8. International trade statistics.

9. Finance statistics.

12. Demographic and social statistics.

20. Provisional agenda for the twenty-ninth session of the Commission.

21. Report of the Commission on its twenty-eighth session.

54. The Working Group made decisions about documents relating to other agenda items as described below.

Agenda item 4. National accounts

55. Any reports intended to provide information should have the status of background documents, i.e., they would not be officially numbered and translated and would only be available in whatever official language(s) the author might provide them in.

Agenda item 5. Service statistics

56. The report of the Secretary-General on service statistics would relate mainly to the question of the domestic service sector as discussed by the Working Group under paragraphs 40-43 above. The report of the Secretary-General on the development of classifications and the implementation of the International Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities, revision 3 (ISIC, Rev.3) (services part), should not be produced (see paras. 58-60 below under agenda item 10 (International economic classifications). The Working Group requested UNSTAT to request the Voorburg Group on Service Statistics to include in its already scheduled report on a substantive topic a progress report on its overall work to date. The Working Group was informed that the substantive topic would include recommendations concerning the revision of the services part of the Provisional Central Product Classification (CPC). The Working Group decided to consider the report of the Voorburg Group under item 10 (International economic classifications).

Agenda item 6. Industrial statistics

57. The report of the Secretary-General on the development of classifications and the implementation of ISIC, Rev.3 (industrial statistics part) should not be produced (see paras. 58-60 below under agenda item 10 (International economic classification).

Agenda items 10 and 11 (merged). International economic classifications and Monitoring adherence to adopted United Nations classifications

58. The Secretariat had proposed in the supplementary note to E/CN.3/AC.1/1994/R.5 that the following five reports, all dealing with classifications, be deleted: (a) report on the development of classifications and implementation of the International Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities, revision 3 (ISIC, Rev.3) (both services part and industrial statistics part); (b) report on computerized correspondence tables and functional classifications of expenditure; (c) report on the draft revised

Classification of the Functions of Government (COFOG); (d) report on the draft revised Classification of Individual Consumption (COICOP); and (e) report on the present situation and monitoring regarding the adoption of classifications in countries and their relationship to adopted United Nations classifications, and advantages and disadvantages of more flexible standards, classifications and other elements, concentrating in the first instance on classifications for economic activities and commodities.

59. The Secretariat proposed, in addition, that UNSTAT host an expert group meeting to review the current status of activities under way to develop economic classifications. The expert group should produce a strategic plan for future work on classifications, defining institutional roles and responsibilities for such work and recommending a schedule for the next steps in the process. That plan of action should be presented to the Statistical Commission for its review and guidance; however, the Working Group noted the difficulty of preparing such a plan far enough in advance of the Statistical Commission to allow for its timely translation. The Working Group also noted the background document on economic classifications in the new North American Industry Classification System (NAICS).

60. The Working Group endorsed the proposal of UNSTAT to develop a strategic plan and agreed to eliminate the five documents referred to in paragraph 58 above.

Agenda item 13. Measuring and monitoring economic and social development

61. The Working Group welcomed an offer by the Central Statistical Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to prepare a report, in cooperation with other national statistical offices, on the implications for statistics of the World Summit for Social Development; it decided to include that report under agenda item 13. The Working Group deleted the report of the Secretary-General on the programme to monitor the achievement of social goals, as well as the report on measuring and monitoring economic and social development and aspects of the statistical implications of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade.

62. The Working Group requested UNSTAT to obtain from UNDP its views on measuring human development, which would provide an opportunity for UNDP to express its ideas and receive the response of countries and international organizations.

Agenda item 14. Environment statistics

63. Any reports intended to provide information should have the status of background documents, i.e., they would not be officially numbered and translated and would only be available in whatever official language(s) the author might provide them in.

Agenda item 15. Technical cooperation in statistics

64. The Working Group requested the Secretariat to proceed with UNFPA and UNDP to prepare the report on the funding situation for technical cooperation in statistics and to change the content of the currently scheduled report under agenda item 15, "Report of the Secretary-General on technical cooperation in statistics, including an assessment of agency support cost arrangements and the crisis in funding technical cooperation in statistics", by deleting the section on the crisis in funding technical cooperation in statistics. The Working Group recalled that the report would cover the effects of current arrangements on funding at the regional and global levels.

Agenda item 17. Coordination and integration of international statistical programmes

65. The Working Group decided to add to item 17 four documents from agenda item 3 (Strengthening international statistical cooperation), namely (a) the present report; (b) the report of the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities on its twenty-eighth session (E/CN.3/1995/11); (c) the report of the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities on plans in methodological development (to be prepared by the Secretariat on behalf of the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities, based on input from each of the inter-agency task forces established by the Commission); and (d) the report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of statistical data collection from countries (see para. 52 above).

Agenda item 18. Commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of international statistical work in the United Nations system

66. The Working Group decided that in addition to the suggestions made by the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities (E/CN.3/1995/11, para. 39), the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary should include an evening function during the Commission session to which the Secretary-General and other dignitaries, including permanent representatives, would be invited. The Working Group requested UNSTAT to make arrangements, including media coverage for the event.

67. In addition, the Working Group endorsed the preparation of a commemorative publication that would cover, inter alia, the achievements of the international statistical system, and it requested UNSTAT to investigate the feasibility of preparing such a publication. Other suggestions were made, including (a) the development of a logo, which might be included on the cover of national and international statistical publications, and (b) the development of a 1 or 2-page statement on achievements in international statistical work, which might be included in national and international statistical publications.

68. The Working Group requested UNSTAT to contact a number of countries and inquire whether they celebrated a national statistics day, the objectives and methods of such a celebration, and their opinions and suggestions concerning a world statistics day, and to report to the Working Group at its next session.

Agenda item 19. Programme questions and related matters

69. The Working Group requested the Secretariat to clarify, in the proposed documentation, the time period and other details concerning medium-term planning for statistics in the United Nations.

70. The Working Group requested that authors, when their reports had been finalized well in advance of the session and significant events had since occurred or issues arisen, provide updated information in the form of a brief background document, possibly supplemented by a brief oral statement at the session itself.

VIII. DATES, VENUE AND AGENDA OF THE EIGHTEENTH SESSION OF THE WORKING GROUP

71. The Working Group recommended that its eighteenth session be held from 7 to 10 November 1995; it agreed that UNSTAT should ascertain the availability of services in either Geneva or Vienna.

72. The Working Group approved the following provisional agenda for its eighteenth session:

1. Implementation of the SNA.
2. Work of the inter-agency task forces.
3. Social statistics.
4. Economic classifications.
5. Role of the regional commissions.
6. Rationalization and improvement of reporting to the Statistical Commission.
7. Statistical support for policy issues at the international level.
8. World Statistics Day.

IX. NOTE OF APPRECIATION

73. The Working Group acknowledged the valuable contribution to the field of statistics made by Mr. Aziz Taj of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development over the 30 years of his dedicated service to the United Nations system and as a member of the many committees on which he had participated.

Notes

1/ See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1993, Supplement No. 6 (E/1993/26), chap. III.

2/ See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1994, Supplement No. 9 (E/1994/29), chap. III.

3/ Ibid., para. 51.

4/ Ibid., para. 38.

5/ Ibid., para. 38 (a), (b) and (d).

6/ Ibid., para. 38 (c).

7/ As endorsed by the Economic and Social Council based on the recommendation of the Statistical Commission at its special session (see Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1994 ..., para. 1).

Annex I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Members	
Argentina	H. Eduardo Montero
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Kenya	P. Kallaa
Mexico	M. Cervera
Poland	J. Olenski
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Economic Commission for Europe	T. J. Griffin
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean	P. Sainz

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific	A. J. Flatt
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	A. Taj
United Nations Population Fund	T. Jensen
<u>Specialized agencies and related organizations</u>	
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World Bank	R. Chander
International Monetary Fund	J. B. McLenaghan S. Quinn
United Nations Industrial Development Organization	R. H. Ballance
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<u>Other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations</u>	
Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development	L. Kincannon
Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States	M. Korolev
Statistical Office of the European Communities	A. Chantraine J. Whitworth

Annex II

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Document symbol*	Agenda item	Title or description
E/CN.3/AC.1/1994/R.1	2	Provisional annotated agenda
E/CN.3/AC.1/1994/R.2	3	Report of the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on National Accounts on the implementation and other follow-up of the 1993 System of National Accounts (1993 SNA)
E/CN.3/AC.1/1994/R.4	4 (c)	Report of the Secretary-General on progress in relation to implementing the decisions and recommendations made by the Statistical Commission at its twenty-seventh session
E/CN.3/AC.1/1994/R.5	5	Provisional agenda and documentation for the twenty-eighth session of the Statistical Commission
E/CN.3/AC.1/1994/R.6	6	Decisions and requests made by the Statistical Commission at its special session (New York, 11-15 April 1994): actions taken or planned and any problems

* No document was issued under the symbol E/CN.3/AC.1/1994/R.3.

Annex III

AGENDA

1. Election of officers.

2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.

3. Implementation and other follow-up of the 1993 System of National Accounts (1993 SNA).

4. Strengthening international statistical cooperation:

   (a) Work of the inter-agency task forces;

   (b) Strengthening the role of the regional commissions in statistics;

   (c) Other matters.

5. Provisional agenda and documentation for the twenty-eighth session of the Statistical Commission.

6. Monitoring the implementation of decisions of the Statistical Commission.

7. Services statistics.

8. Statistical support for policy analysis issues at the international level.

9. Technical cooperation in statistics.

10. Dates and venue of the eighteenth session.

11. Report of the Working Group on its seventeenth session.